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# MESSENGER

VOL. LXIII

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

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## Front Cover

Prayer in Kotoura Church—Burkina Faso

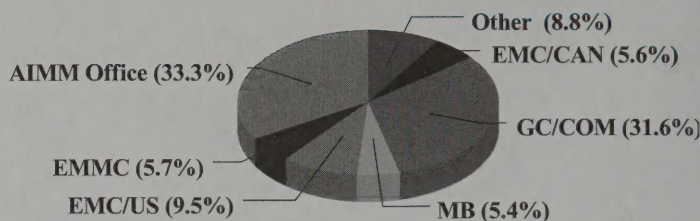


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The pie chart above represents the 1996 budget for AIMM excluding missionary salaries. This budget is \$410,824. The AIMM office is responsible to raise 33.3% or \$136,828 this year. The AIMM portion is raised as you send your contributions directly to our office either in Steinbach, Manitoba, or in Elkhart, Indiana. If God is challenging you to become involved with AIMM, now would be the perfect time to send your gift to:

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# Prayer Is Costly

by Don Rempel Boschman

The knock on the door woke me from my sleep. I looked at my watch, it was about 2 a.m. Who could it be? I stumbled to the door and found one of the Mennonite co-workers standing there. Briefly she explained that one of the Mennonite children was very sick and had been airlifted during the night to the village in which I was living in order to be seen by a pediatrician who lived in our village.

The next morning I went to visit some good Batswana friends in order to ask them to pray for the child. Bishop Bolokwe and his daughter were well known throughout southern Botswana for their spiritual insight and for the effectiveness of their prayers. Almost every day several people would come to visit them, asking for prayer. Bishop Bolokwe, who was now in his 80s, had asked me to help train the pastors of his church and thus we had become both close friends and co-workers.

After hearing what had happened, Bishop Bolokwe and his daughter Mma Tiny, agreed to pray for the child. They left the room in order to put on the clothing in which they prayed while I waited for them in their small living room. When they returned, Mma Tiny handed me a thick, soft towel. I was bewildered at first, what was the towel for? Seeing my bewilderment, Mma Tiny explained that the floor was hard and so I would need the towel to protect my knees from the cold, hard cement during the long time we would be praying.

Later, as I reflected on our time of prayer, I realized I had been taught a lesson. In Bishop Bolokwe's mind, both he and his daughter could pray at length on their knees on the concrete floor, but the missionary needed a towel. In other words, Bishop Bolokwe was sure that his 80-year-old knees were up to the task of prayer, and his daughter was sure that her 50-year-old knees were up to the task, but they both doubted whether the knees of the 30-year-old missionary had developed the strength and the calluses needed to pray for any length of time.



Many Batswana Christians spend large amounts of time in prayer, and our family has increasingly come to value this during the past year. In April 1995, my wife Kathleen injured her back. Medical treatment in June of that year made the situation much worse and Kathleen was virtually bedridden for several months.

During that time literally hundreds of people, both in North America and Botswana, prayed for Kathleen. Many of those people had never met Kathleen, but only knew of her plight.

One group of Christians in particular was a source of strength to us. The Parana Apostolic Church is a small denomination of about 100 members comprising two active congregations. Two of their pastors attend a Bible study I lead and they were very concerned about Kathleen's health. They asked if they could come and pray for her on a regular basis.

Every Wednesday evening during those difficult months about fifteen Christians, mainly university students, came to our house for about an hour to sing and pray for Kathleen. A highlight for us during those services was the preaching, which focused on healing stories in the Bible. The message was always the same: God performed miracles in the Bible and God is still performing them today. Of course, we knew that, but during those bleak months our hearts needed to be constantly reminded of it.

As Kathleen continued to struggle with

her pain, the Parana Church decided that hers was an especially difficult case, which needed the elders' intervention. At their own cost, a group of five older people boarded a bus and traveled the 300 km (200 miles) to our home. None of these people had ever met Kathleen but they felt called to come and pray for her. They prayed and fasted that weekend for someone they didn't know.

Because of the Parana Church I have learned

how costly prayer can be. "I will pray for you" is a promise that is often too freely given. The members of the Parana gave large amounts of time to pray for us. They spent a lot of money to pray for us in person. I am sure that God would have heard them just as well had they stayed home and prayed for us for a shorter period, but their costly sacrifice was not only pleasing to God, it also lifted our spirits as very few other things could. Even missionaries need to be preached to and reminded that God can and does see and help people today.

"I'll pray for you." That can be a costly phrase but one that if meant sincerely can bring great blessings, even a miracle.

*P.S. The Mennonite child at the beginning of the story recovered. Kathleen's pain is reduced and she is much more mobile than she was before but she has not yet recovered.*



*The Rempel Boschmans—Lisa, Kathleen, Don*



# Visit of Zaire Mennonite Church Leaders Strengthens Fraternal Relationship

by Leona Schrag

Zaire Mennonite Church leaders rejoiced to be participating in the first meeting in North America for a periodic review of the working agreement established between Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) and the Zaire Mennonite Church (CMZa - Communauté Mennonite au Zaire). All other such meetings have been held in Zaire with a delegation traveling from North America.

March 19-21 CMZa delegates met with representatives of AIMM at the AIMM Administrative Office in Elkhart, Indiana, to review the 1989 agreement and develop a new agreement. Joy and celebration in the continuing fraternal partnership of the two autonomous groups marked the official convention-signing ceremony on March 23 at the conclusion of the AIMM Spring Board Meeting held at Silverwood Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana.

The seven-member delegation led by CMZa president and legal representative, Rev. Fimbo Ganvunze, also included the following: Rev. Shamuimba Mbombo, vice-president and director of the



*The CMZa Delegation and AIMM Board 3/23/96*

Department of Evangelism and Life of the Church; Mackunya Shalukombo, general secretary; Rev. Ndambu Tshinyangu, provincial president of Central Kasai Province; Kakesa Khakha, elder and lay representative for Bandundu Province (also served as the first legal representative of the church); Kandianka Shambuyi, lay representative for Central Kasai Province; and Pumbu Gambanda Fimbo, professor and secretary at the Bible Institute, also wife of President Fimbo.

The delegates repeatedly expressed appreciation for the ministry of AIMM through the years in the life of the Mennonite Church. CMZa now numbers over 80,000 members in 900 congregations served by 197 ordained pastors. The church has 68 districts organized into 7

provinces. Central administrative offices for the church are located at Tshikapa.

The economic and political crisis in Zaire impacts the work of the church. The average Zairian struggles to provide the necessities of life for the family. Some cannot afford education for their children which now must often be paid in foreign currency. Local currency

can devalue by the hour. Employment is very difficult to find.

Yet, the church continues in ministry and is growing. Outreach efforts are being developed among Rwandan refugees in cooperation with Communauté Evangélique Mennonite (Evangelical Mennonite Church), and the Communauté Evangélique des Frères Mennonites (Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire). The three Mennonite Churches in Zaire have formed their own Inter-Mennonite mission agency for this outreach and potentially to other countries.

CMZa leaders emphasized their desire for continued missionary presence in Zaire for partnership ministry. They also request continued financial, spiritual and material help. Prayer support is essential.

## Irma Beitler Graber

"The realization that down through the years God saw me and led me and called me has been so vivid and clear and blessed, it has made service a joy and privilege." This excerpt from a letter written by Irma Ruth Beitler to Congo Inland Mission (Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission) in 1947 could well be her testimony to us today.

Irma began service with AIMM in 1948 when she studied French and tropical medicine in Brussels. She arrived in Zaire in November of 1949 to begin her medical ministry. On April 19, 1951, she married co-worker Archie Graber. As a nurse she worked at the clinics in Charlesville, Tshikapa, Bakwanga, Kikwit, Kalonda. One year she was a "parent" at the mis-

sionary children's hostel in Kinshasa. She also joined her husband in evangelistic travels, moved with him to various construction sites and ministered with him to the refugees in Bakwanga and the Kwilu. While Archie and Irma retired from AIMM in 1969 they accepted an invitation to return to Zaire in 1972-73 for the major construction project of the CMZa Administration Center.

Well known for her ready smile, boundless energy and commitment to Christ and others Irma died of cancer on September 29, 1995, in Archbold, Ohio, where she lived in retirement with her husband Archie and near her daughter and family, Nancy and Loren Roth, Philip and Alex.





# Prayer for Peace and Reconciliation in South Africa

by Gary and Jean Isaac

Many throughout the world hailed the 1994 South African democratic elections, and the demise of officially-sanctioned apartheid, as a history-shaping event on the scale of the destruction of the Berlin wall. The change that has taken place here is still awesome to people living here. Of course, much remains to be done.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has taken center stage in South Africa's political arena for 1996. The preamble to the interim constitution makes provision for the Commission by stating that there shall be *understanding*, not retaliation; *reparation*, not revenge; *respect for humanity*, not victimization. It further states that *amnesty shall be granted*. The TRC was set up to aid in healing the nation of the terrible human-rights abuses that have taken place over the years. Victims and their families cannot forgive faceless perpetrators. For this reason, cases of human-rights violations have been investigated. Victims and/or their families are invited to come forward with their stories. Perpetrators are asked to make their confessions and are promised amnesty for full disclosure. It is hoped this will help bring closure to a horrible period in South African history.

The cut-off date for submissions is December 14, 1996.

Of course, truth, reconciliation and forgiveness are at the center of Christian faith. Wisely, the government has given the Church a prominent role in the process. The highly-respected Archbishop Desmond Tutu is chair of the Commission, with other prominent church leaders also involved. Local churches are being mobilized to encourage members to come forward with their stories. They are also to be prepared to counsel both victim and perpetrator. The process has great scope for success, but is fraught with dangers.

The first round of the TRC's work was completed May 10. A total of 140 witnesses appeared before the Commission in East London, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban during that four-week period. They told in graphic, chilling detail of police brutality, torture, murder, and the abduction of activists. When closing the round of hearings, Archbishop Tutu said that over the previous weeks he had been struck by the "depths of depravity" that had emerged through people's testimonies. No doubt there is individual and collective catharsis taking place.

Baba Sikwepere, who lost his eyesight after being shot in the face by a policeman, said he felt like "I got my sight back by coming here and telling my story." There is great concern that national healing will, indeed, take place. Many of the victims who testified demonstrated a remarkable spirit of forgiveness.

However, there is potential for much bitterness in the next step, when the Commission begins its amnesty hearings. Details of horrible human-rights abuses are likely to emerge. The key will be the spirit in which the perpetrators give testimony. If they come forward with no evident remorse, only to get amnesty, forgiveness will be difficult if not impossible to extend. Fears of an increase in racial tension are not groundless. South Africa desperately needs to put its hideous past behind it. This is possible through the work of the same Spirit of God who brought an end to the rule of apartheid.

*We urge all believers to pray for widespread healing and reconciliation in South Africa.*

## Aganetha Friesen Enns

September 1938 marked the beginning of a long career of missionary service in Congo/Zaire for Aganetha Friesen Enns, better known to co-workers as "Aggie" and to Zairians as "Mama Bilonda."

As a nurse her primary role was working particularly in rural maternities. No one knows how many babies she helped deliver! She began her Zaire experience at Charlesville, now known as Ndjoko Punda, but also served at Kamayala, Banga, Nyanga, Tshikapa and Kalonda. In the early years of her ministry in Zaire she also gave leadership to girls' and women's work. She was always concerned that people be introduced to Jesus Christ.

From December of 1958 to November of 1961 Aggie stayed in the U.S. to care for her parents but then returned to service in Zaire. She retired in October 1974. Shortly after returning to the U.S. she married retired AIMM missionary Frank Enns on December 30, 1974. She died on June 30 in McPherson, Kansas. Her husband preceded her in death on July 20, 1975.

Aggie was a joyful, gentle person always concerned with helping others and putting their needs before her own. She also modeled wisdom, strength and confidence. She will be missed by family and friends.





# Timed Perfectly

by Jerry Fluth

**"Sometimes I wonder if God doesn't have a watch—or even a calendar. He misses our deadlines, and is frequently late in responding to our prayers for instant action."**

I'm always conscious of time—never want to be late, and get irritated when others are. Sermons and meetings should end on time, don't you agree?

We try to budget and control time, yet often end by complaining of the tyranny of time. We get up by the alarm, go to work by the clock, eat at mealtimes, and schedule everything. Here we time every telephone call to the second. Time is precious, and we don't want to waste any of it. If our computer takes 20 seconds to boot, or runs at less than 50 Mhz, we become impatient.

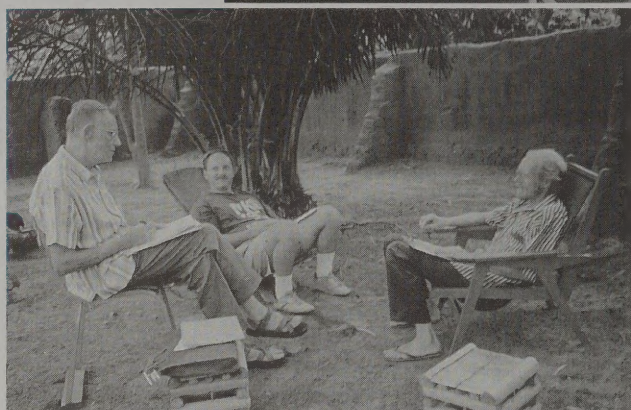
Sometimes I wonder if God doesn't have a watch—or even a calendar. He misses our deadlines, and is frequently late in responding to our prayers for instant action. But I just finished reading the book of Job this morning, and was reminded how foolish it is to find fault with God.

Actually, I have been very impressed with His timing lately. There have been some amazing evidences that God keeps perfect time.

It has been the perfect time for us to be in Burkina Faso, and in retrospect I can see how God had already been putting things and events in place for years! I did not get the job I wanted; but "retirement" became a possibility. Concerns about caring for our house (and taxes) were solved by our son and his wife moving in. Our youngest son was accepted into college just in time. Over the years, I have struggled through lots of problems in missionary work in Africa. But at my age, people kindly refer to that as "administrative experience." So, it is plain to us that God



*Above: Monie Fluth teaching Nathaniel and David Petersen; Left: l-r, Jerry Fluth, Gordon Klassen, and Paul Thiessen in administrative committee meeting.*



had been at work timing our preparation and availability to match the need in Burkina during Elmer and Jeannette Thiessen's year of North America Assignment. Could it be that some people were praying?

Confirmation is not hard to find:

—Gord and Beckie Klassen's baby came at a convenient time—when we could act as house parents for our precious MKs at the school in Orodara.

—Some of that "experience" I referred to has come in handy as we face new administrative challenges here.

—Monie's previous experience in running busy mission guest houses was immediately applied to her job here. And, being used to language barriers, her non-verbal communication skills are being fully utilized.

—We have appreciated being close to Dan and Kathy (our daughter) Petersen and our grandchildren. And it has been wonderful to be available to them this year. Grandma has even been able to relieve Kathy of some home schooling responsibilities.

—The missionary team has received us warmly and assures us that they recognize God's timing in our being here. Body parts are fitting together well!

As a team, we have been greatly encouraged as we see God's perfect timing:

—Just when several of us were feeling dry and in desperate need of fellowship and Bible study, God led Bonnie Schmidt to invite us to her house every two weeks for worship, Bible study, and prayer—and in our own mother tongue! What a joy!

—Remember when Jesus healed a boy he didn't even go to see? He just answered the father's request and said, "Your son will live." (John 4:46-53) Checking their watches later, they realized the fever left at that exact hour. A similar thing happened at our last team worship and prayer time. Someone we had been especially concerned for was touched at the exact hour we prayed.

—Five years ago, Gord Klassen had talked with a man at a building site in Bobo-Dioulasso, just for the purpose of learning the Jula language. But this year, God used that contact to provide a new house at a perfect location in Orodara for our new teacher, Elvira Hamm! God was working long before we even knew we had a need.

A study guide some of us have been using lately pointed out that the many names of God came from different people experiencing God in various ways. We were asked to reflect on our own experiences with God, and give Him another, personal name. My immediate thought was: The Perfect Timer!



# MKs Reaching Out

by Beckie Klassen



*Left: Congregation giving attention to the puppet show; Middle: Puppet show; Bottom: Bonnie Schmidt, Joy Petersen and John-Mark Bergen working the puppets.*



Allowing the MK to be a “missionary,” not just a “missionary kid,” providing an opportunity to be directly involved in evangelism, creating a sense of team spirit, and developing a vision for missions—all of these were our goals as we put together and presented, in puppet show form, the story of Daniel (in the lions’ den). We visited the five national Burkina Faso Mennonite churches. Studies have shown that one of the most important factors in a positive MK experience is that the MK must see the parents’ ministry as valuable. In putting together the puppet show our MKs experienced some of the same blessings and struggles that their parents face.

Preparations for the puppet show involved everyone. I worked on writing the script first in English. Then our Burkinabé teacher at Orodara Kalanso translated it into Jula. Five young men from our church came and recorded the Jula voices for us. Meanwhile, the hostel kids put their artistic skills to use, snipping at their pieces of foam to make just the right shaped puppet head, making the clothes, drawing and then painting the three backdrops for the theater. Gord built the puppet theater and even sewed the curtains for it. Many hours were put into learning to coordinate the puppets’ actions with the pre-recorded sound track. This was especially difficult because the MKs have limited understanding of the Jula language.

Now we were ready to “take it on the road.” Gord, our chauffeur, carefully packed our equipment, and we packed ourselves into our Peugeot 504 (the dust mobile). Our group was made up of four puppeteers, the sound man, me and our two kids. The churches were from half a kilometer to 50 kilometers away on bumpy dirt roads. Our audiences had

never seen anything like our presentation before. Siaka Traoré, our conference pastor, followed up our presentation with a time of teaching by posing the question: “What spoke to you in the story?” The one overriding point that struck home was the strength of Daniel’s faith and his courage in the face of persecution.

Many face persecution in much the same way that Daniel did in terms of non-believers trying to find fault. Some noted that even though Daniel was not in his homeland he remained firm in his faith. An observation was made about the king. He “had it all” in the world’s eyes and yet couldn’t sleep, while Daniel spent the night in peace amidst the lions. It is God, not wealth and power, who brings peace. One more application was made that if we are victorious over our difficulties, others will know. Just as the king witnessed Daniel’s faith and resulting victory, he decreed that all his kingdom “must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever.” (Daniel 5:26)

As we reflect on our experience in preparing and presenting the story of Daniel we see that our purposes in doing it were met. Our unity as a hostel family was strengthened. In visiting the churches, many for the first time, we now better understand what ministry to these people entails. It was a joy to see how the story was so relevant to the believers. We all agree that it was well worth the hard work which resulted in sharing the Gospel with others. We also had fun!

Where do we go from here? We have completed this project successfully and want to continue to give the MKs similar ministry opportunities. You can *pray with us* that God would show us another form of ministry enabling our MKs to reach out.





# Prayer Unites People Across Continents

by Betty Enns

We were blessed with a grandson on April 22, 1996. We have never had the opportunity to meet him. And it seemed for a few hours we would never be so blessed as to meet him. Let me tell you the story.

On June 1 we were wakened by the concerned, yet calm, strong voice of our son-in-law Peter calling from Arviat, NWT Canada. "We are waiting for a Medical Evacuation aeroplane to arrive to fly our little son out to a medical centre in Churchill, MB. The nurses here are not sure what the problem is, they only know our son is seriously ill. His little body is covered with bruising and they suspect internal hemorrhaging."

Needless to say, we as grandparents were deeply concerned. It was 12 midnight in Canada and 7 a.m. here in Lesotho. Having lived in Canada's north where our children presently live with the Inuit we knew to get him to a centre where help may be available God must undertake. I set aside the day for fasting and prayer. Bill with 3 men from Botswana and our AIMM Bible-teaching couple, Brian and Tricia Reimer, needed to go to TY for an Africa Federal Church Council conference. Bill was to be one of the presenters for the day.

During my time of prayer I was led to Ezekiel 37. It's the passage where Ezekiel prophesies over the dead bones of Israel. He calls the breath of God to come forth from the four winds and breathe upon the slain that they might live. I cried to the Lord using the words of Ezekiel 37:1-14, affirming God's goodness, his power and placing our grandson in his hands. Meanwhile Bill and the others went to the conference. During the conference Bill shared the story of our grandson. Time was spent in prayer on his behalf. One Masotho gentleman, Ntate Setumo, a real prayer warrior, closed the time of prayer with one final commanding plea.

Upon their return that afternoon Bill said, "Ntate Setumo nearly raised the roof." "I have never heard such powerful prayer," said Tricia.

Nine hours later again the phone rang. It was Wendy, our daughter, telling us they were waiting for another Med Evac

aeroplane which was to take them to Winnipeg, another four-hour flight. The Churchill doctors in consultation with Winnipeg doctors recognized they were unable to diagnose or treat this child. By the time they arrived in Winnipeg

**"When Isaac arrived back in Lesotho he said, 'When those North American people pray, God hears and answers.' Now he can also see in a very real way that 'when those Basotho pray, God listens, hears and answers.'"**

Andrew's blood platelet count was down to 2. (A normal count is 200.) His entire body was bruising, even the inside of his mouth.

Intervening hours saw the hands of many people, across the continents of Africa and NA, united in prayer. Night came. Still no word from our children. I was awakened at midnight and felt this overwhelming urgency to pray. I prayed and then dozed off. At 12:50 a.m. I awoke again, this time I was pinned to my bed and heard the sound as of wind, much clattering and clamoring. I said, "Dear God, we're being robbed again. Who cares. You're in charge." In having said that there was one last loud sigh of resignation and sounds of hurried exiting. Quiet and calm replaced the clattering and clamoring. Within that calmness there was a voice saying, "It is finished. It is finished." I knew in my heart the incident had to do with our grandson. However, I didn't know—had he died or was he to be healed? Even not knowing, I felt at peace.

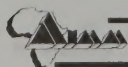
I woke Bill and shared what had just happened. We lay in our bed in quiet contemplation waiting for a call from our children to tell us the meaning of this whole event.

At 1:30 a.m. our daughter called. The doctors thought they had been able to diagnose the problem and at that very moment were putting little Andrew on an IV to feed him some protein plasma with the hope that this would help to restore his platelet count.

The following day they were told it would be a long hospital stay, six weeks of possible IV feeding and monitoring. They planned to do a bone marrow tap within 24 hours to see whether the plasma feeding was effective. Much to the amazement of the medical profession Andrew's platelet count was higher than normal within the first thirty-six hours. "Never in the history of this hospital have we seen a case like this!"

Wendy and Peter were told they could take their son back to the north country. He was healed! Christians all over the North West Territories, Africa and Manitoba raised prayers of praise and gratitude extolling God for the goodness bestowed on one of his little ones.

This uniting of hands in prayer has another very special significance for us in Lesotho. Last September through November (95) we had a pastor exchange with North America (NA). There had been a drought in Lesotho since '93. During Isaac and Rebecca Moshoeshoe's visit to NA he called to see what was happening "at home." We informed him "we still had not had rain" and he should ask the people in NA to pray specifically for rain. He did. A prayer chain was started and within a few hours Lesotho had its first "bath." Intermittent rains continued throughout the next six months. Crops grew. Livestock began to look healthy. People had a harvest this past fall. When Isaac arrived back in Lesotho he said, "When those NA people pray, God hears and answers." Now he can also see in a very real way that "when those Basotho pray, God listens, hears and answers."





# Senegal: Taking a Bold Step Forward

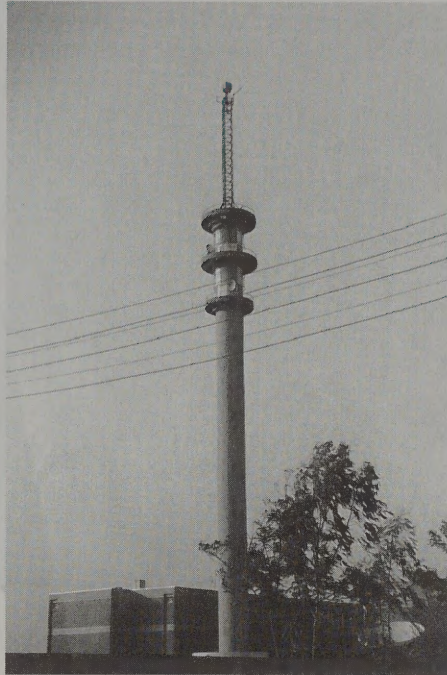
by Garry Prieb

Less than a year after the AIMM Board made the decision to enter Senegal, AIMM sent its first missionaries into Senegal this past summer with the hope of beginning a future ministry of evangelism and church planting among the Wolof. God works in marvelous ways.

At its October 1995 meeting, the AIMM Board decided to take a bold step forward and enter yet another West African Muslim country - Senegal - for a period of up to three years with potential for long-term ministry there. This decision came after 7 years of study and consultation by AIMM Board members and staff along with Zairian and Burkina Faso Mennonite church leaders.

Senegal: land of sun, sand and stability, has 15 ethnic groups, primarily the Wolof, Peuhl and Toucouleurs in a population of approximately 7 million people. The official language is French and the dominant trade language is Wolof.

AIMM is seeking to reach the Wolof, an ethnic, Muslim people group numbering 3 million, for Jesus Christ. In a country where the dominant religion is Islam, the Wolof have been one of the groups



*A Muslim prayer tower in Dakar, Senegal.*

most resistant to Christianity. Islam is practiced by 90% of the people; 5.7% are Christian, with .1% being Protestant. Reports estimate less than 100 Christians

and only one Wolof pastor in Senegal. Although these statistics might be considered as bleak, a positive note is that most of these Wolof have found their way to Jesus within the last decade. We are hopeful and praying that these cracks in the wall of Islam, tiny as they are, will not be a temporary blip on the graph but may be the beginning of greater things.

AIMM missionaries, Richard and Adela Bergen and their children Nicole, Joshua and Micah, are now living in Dakar, Senegal where Richard is director of the Dakar Christian Academy. They previously served in Zaire with AIMM as "hostel parents" in Kinshasa from 1984-1988. Part of their assignment, in addition to responsibilities at the Academy, is to "become familiar with the social and religious life in Senegal, obtain more information on possible outreach locations and approaches, relate to other missions and churches, and prepare for the practical needs of future AIMM outreach workers."

Pray for AIMM that God will provide the needed future workers as the Bergens lay the groundwork and make preparations for future ministry.

*continued from page 8 Prayer Unites  
People Across Continents*

Having walked with the Lord for many years I am keenly aware God does not always choose to answer prayer in such dramatic fashion. Many times He chooses

to allow sickness to take its course; a course which leads to the death of a loved one. Having experienced both death and restoration of health, I can say He sustains us in and through both; although restoration of health is an easier answer to cope with and rejoice in!

"Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Ps. 46:10

What a wonderful God we serve!

## Martha Hiebert Janzen

Martha Hiebert Janzen died on November 11, 1995, in Mountain Lake, MN. She served forty years as a Mennonite Brethren missionary nurse in

Zaire. She and her husband Aaron retired from the field in 1950. Following Rev. Janzen's death Martha returned to Zaire for two more terms. From 1961-1963 she

was on loan to AIMM as a midwife at Mukedi and thus is remembered by many former AIMM Zaire missionaries.





# Healing Through Prayer

by Eugene Thieszen

Paseka! In Botswana's African Independent Churches it is the centerpiece of all church celebrations. Often the celebration is a marathon of services that begins around sunset on Maundy Thursday and continues until sunrise on Resurrection Sunday.

I usually plan to attend the Paseka festival at one of the churches I work with. This past year I celebrated with the Revelation Blessed Peace Church congregations in the Maun area. The Thursday evening service was long and tiring. After Communion the preaching and singing went far into the night. Arriving at home around 4:00 a.m., I stumbled out of my truck and into bed, thoroughly exhausted. Friday morning I awoke feeling ill. As I contemplated the day's anticipated events, I could not summon the energy to sit through a 6-hour midday service followed by another all-nighter. So I stayed home to rest and recover, hoping to return to the festival on Saturday if the illness passed.

When I arrived at the church on Saturday morning for the choir competition, I was met by several concerned church leaders. After the formal greetings came their questions. Where had I been yesterday? Had I decided not to come because they had not included me in the preaching schedule for the day? No, I said, I had stayed at home because I was not feeling well. The Bishop looked at me in genuine surprise. I will never forget the look on his face nor his words. If I was feeling sick, he said, why had I stayed at home where I could not be helped. Why had I not come to the church so that the pastors could pray for me?

Prayer and healing. The central ministry of many, if not all, African Independent Churches in Botswana. Time is always set aside for prayers of healing and blessing. But what you see Sunday morning is just a glimpse. The pumping heart and lifeblood of the ministry of an AIC is seen if you visit the church compound during the week in the evening hours after work.

What you find may surprise you—people waiting quietly for a consultation with the church's ordained healers. Their problems vary. Some are sick, some have reason to believe that they have been bewitched or cursed in some way, others

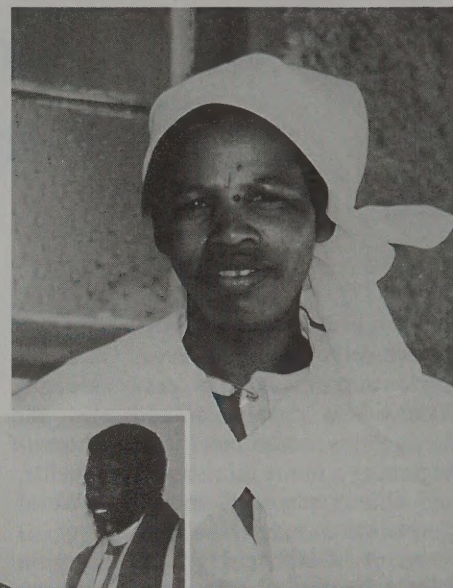
would like prayer in order to find a job.

This prayer and healing ministry is an important example of African Christians taking the message of the Bible and making it their own. In contrast to our rational



Western approach to illness and diagnosing its causes, African Christians understand sickness in spiritual terms. Where we seek the knowledge of a university-educated doctor and antibiotics or vaccines to defeat bacteria and viruses, they seek out persons gifted by the Holy Spirit in discerning the spiritual causes of their afflictions and a purification of the uncleanness that has polluted the body and spirit making the person ill. Applying what they see in the Bible through the lens of their culture, African Independent Churches have concluded that healing is their most important ministry, a ministry which has become a powerful means of evangelism.

The basic foundation of life, as people in Botswana understand it, is an elemental life-force which exists to some degree in every visible object, plant, animal or human being. In the Setswana language this life-force is called *moya* (roughly the equivalent of spirit or air). *Moya* is neither good nor evil; it takes on good or evil characteristics based on the motives of those who access its power. In human experience, *moya* is part of a continuum that begins with the unborn, pulsates in the living, and finds its culmination in the living-dead, or ancestors, the spirits of those who have departed. Over all and



Above: *Mma-Moima*, Prayer healer.

Left: l-r, Bishop S. Mfaladi; Senior Pastor, L. Malepe; Eugene Thieszen; Senior Pastor, N. Pusoetsile.

above all is *Modimo*, the high and distant one, God with whom human beings have little or no dealings.

Life is precarious and in order for a person to survive it is very important that balance be maintained. Innovation and independence are frowned upon, because they throw the world out of balance.

When someone becomes ill, or experiences a series of catastrophes it is because this balance has been disrupted in some way. Perhaps someone has bewitched the man whose cattle are dying, stealing part or all of his life-force to enrich his own. Maybe a woman has violated the traditions of the ancestors, incurring their wrath, and hence is barren. To find out, the person goes to the traditional doctor, who divines the cause of the difficulty and prescribes a remedy of herbs, purges or perhaps the sacrifice of an animal to appease the living-dead.

When people who understand life in this particular way encounter the gospel, it is very natural that the salvation offered in Christ will be seen as a potent power to deliver people from the fear, illnesses, and the unpredictability of day-to-day life. With this background it is not a surprise that African Christians see healing prayer as far more important in dealing with the

*continued on next page*



# Zairian Mennonites Unite in First Transcultural Mission

**Rev. Fimbo Ganvunze** *President/Legal Representative CMZa*

The death of President Habyarimana plunged Rwanda into a bloody war placing the Hutu and Tutsi tribes in opposition.

To respond to this crisis, Men-non-ite Central Committee working together with the global Mennonite church, and the Mennonites of Zaire in particular, went to the aid of the Rwandan refugee brothers and sisters.

The testimony of the Mennonites in this area was very significant. In addition to that which the other groups did, the Mennonites brought the message of peace, justice and reconciliation which impacted the lives of the refugees. They requested the presence of Mennonite churches in the countries of the Great Lakes (Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern Zaire).

To reply to this Macedonian appeal, the Zaire Mennonite churches wanted to give a joint response, unifying themselves via the Inter-Mennonite National Committee (CONIM - Comité National Inter-Mennonite).

Several planning meetings took place to prepare for the evangelistic intervention in the countries of the Great Lakes. The major responsibilities of the project are:

—Announce the Good News of Jesus Christ, following the supreme command of the Lord Jesus to go and make disciples



*Top: Kibumba refugee camp in Zaire.*

*Right: Refugee dwellings built next to the road.*



of all nations (Matt. 29:19-20) with the goal of providing peace, justice and reconciliation among the populations of the region of the Great Lakes.

—Take material and financial support to the local development initiatives.

CONIM has associated other partners in this project including among others: Mennonite Central Committee, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services, Mennonite Action Group (Zaire Mennonite

Businessmen), and all the Zaire Mennonite churches (CMZa - Mennonite Community of Zaire; CEFMZ - Evangelical Community of the Mennonite Brethren of Zaire; CEM - Evangelical Mennonite Community). All are represented in the Administrative Committee of 8 members.

The budget for the first year is \$17,330. Receipts will come from all the associated members.

In the same way, two missionary couples are selected; one will go for the first year, and the other couple for the second year. Already on location, the work has begun with a group of 50 members who meet under the direction

of a voluntary service couple from MCC who is already serving in Bukavu.

It is a privilege for the CMZa to participate in this first transcultural missionary experience with other Mennonite churches. In this regard, *we need your prayers* for all spiritual and material resources.

May Bukavu not be the point of arrival, but rather the point of departure to reach all the Great Lakes Region; and why not all of Africa and the world in general!

*continued from page 10 Healing Through Prayer*

crises of illness than Western medicine.

Mma-Moima, a middle-aged woman, is an ordained healer at the Revelation Blessed Peace Church in Maun. She is a woman of incredible discernment, a woman who constantly expresses her absolute trust in the power of God through prayer. I have taken many ill persons to her for consultation, treatment and prayer. I have sought her help myself.

Is there a question lurking in the back of your mind? This healing power, is it from God, or is it perhaps a deception of the evil one? I believe one needs only to witness the

fruit of Mma-Moima's ministry to answer that question. If any doubt lingers, perhaps a talk with one of the traditional doctors in Maun will remove it. He will tell you that he is unable to read his divining bones when Mma-Moima is in the room; the living-dead cannot communicate with him. The power of the Holy Spirit in her life prevents it.

For me, this ministry of prayer and healing has taken on a personal dimension. Because of the encouragement of various AIC leaders, especially Bishop Mfaladi of the Revelation Blessed Peace Church, I have begun to participate in that ministry. Most definitely, this is a ministry in which I am the learner and AIC pastors are the teachers. In May of last year, Archbishop

Israel Motswaosele of the Spiritual Healing Church, ordained me to the ministry of healing prayer. My own Christian walk has been revolutionized by the example of these faithful prayer warriors. I have come to understand afresh the marvel of the grace of God and to practice anew the simple discipline of absolute dependence on God through prayer. The gentle rebuke I received at Paseka has blossomed into an unexpected ministry, a ministry in which God is unquestionably in control. While I may be able to plan and teach a Bible lesson with my own rational abilities, however unwise that may be, I cannot cure the sick or deliver a soul from fear. That is God's work. I can only pray.



# Missionaries Who Returned to Africa

## Teresa & Bryan Born



During the Borns' 4-month furlough en route from Botswana they touched down in Thailand to visit friends, passed through Hong Kong, and landed safely in British Columbia where they spent time with their respective families.

They visited many churches sharing the highlights of their first term of service in Selebi-Phikwe. "We've been very encouraged by many people who've expressed interest in our ministry in Botswana and committed themselves to praying on our behalf."

In early January Ben (11), Katerina (8), and Emily (7) happily returned to their studies and friends. Teresa teaches Sunday school while exploring other ministry possibilities, especially with regard to AIDS prevention. Bryan reviewed the Bible lessons on Moses taught in his absence. In addition to Bible teaching classes for church leaders, he's added a youth Bible study, coaches a basketball team in town, and plans to run an evangelistic basketball camp in the future. "Pray that we'll use our time in accordance with God's plans, not our own."

The Borns are members supported by the Mennonite Brethren Church.

## Marilyn & Rick Derksen

The Derksens chose a 22-months service with 2-months NAA as their assignment schedule. This best fits their children's school calendar [Karina (14), Jeremiah (11), and Erica (7)].

Their NAA included church visits, a COM seminar, a stop at AIMM headquarters, and visits with family and friends in Ontario, New York, Michigan and British Columbia.

In Zaire Marilyn serves as counselor to women, nurse, bookkeeper, and board member at their children's school (TASOK). Rick divides his time between teaching at UCKin (formerly ISTK), counseling pastors and working with the church administrators.

The Derksens have been in Zaire since 1977 and are sponsored by the General Conference Mennonite Church.



## Donna & Loren Entz

Home base for Donna, Loren, Zachary (15), Mariam (12), and Aisha (10) was Elbing, KS, which gave opportunity for participation at Zion Mennonite Church, one of their supporting congregations. They spent time with Donna's family in Canada and were present at the funerals of Loren's parents (in August and December). In addition they visited supporting churches, attended seminars and renewed acquaintances with family and friends.

At home once again in Saraba, Burkina Faso, they continue their work with the Samogho people, testing translated passages and introducing them to the God of the covenant which can be more easily understood than some concepts of the New Testament.

Mariam and Aisha attend Orodara Kalanso school for AIMM missionary children. Zachary is a freshman at International Christian Academy in Ivory Coast.

The Entzes receive their support from the General Conference Mennonite Church.



## Anne Garber Kompaoré

Anne enjoyed a busy, but enjoyable 3-month NAA in Canada and the United States. Part of that time she was able to travel with husband Daniel and her parents. It was nice to have them visit the AIMM office in Elkhart (a "first" for Daniel and her parents).

Speaking engagements and attending the COM seminar were a part of the NAA. Anne is a linguist/consultant. The translation of the Book of James was completed shortly before she left Burkina Faso on NAA. translation of the New Testament and portions of the Old Testament are next on the schedule.

Anne has represented AIMM in Burkina Faso since 1982 and is supported by the General Conference Mennonite Church.

*\*Continuing*





# Missionaries Who Returned to Africa



## Tricia & Brian Reimer

When Brian and Tricia went to Lesotho in 1992 they were a couple. They returned on furlough a family of four. Alex (3) and Natasha (1) experienced their first snow in Canada, where the Reimers resided near family the months they were in North America.

After relating their story to supporting churches, Tricia and Brian have returned to the work begun in Maseru. This time they have other AIMM colleagues serving with them (Bill & Betty Enns). Brian works closely with Isaac Moshoeshoe in Bible teaching and TEE (Theological Education by Extension). The mileage on the vehicle mounts as they travel from one seminar to another. Tricia assists at seminars when they are held nearby.

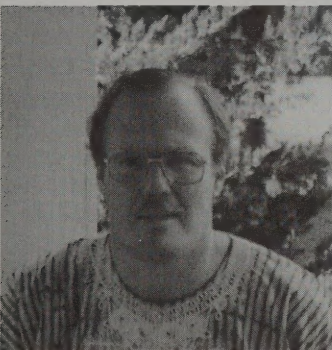
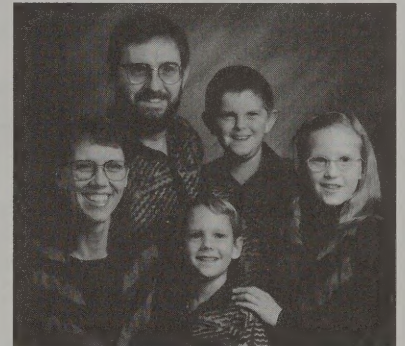
The Reimers are supported by the Evangelical Mennonite Conference/Canada.

## Jeannette & Elmer Thiessen

The Thiessens' year of furlough sped by quickly as it was filled with travel, speaking, and preparation for another term of service in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. Winnipeg was home for them for one year. Donovan (13), Phoebe (9), and Michael (8), enjoyed living close to their cousins and grandparents. At times they wondered if the snow would ever end!

Elmer is team coordinator for B.F. Jeannette serves as guesthouse hostess while home schooling their younger child. As support personnel for the B.F. missionaries their responsibilities are many and varied. They purchase supplies, arrange travel and documentation, provide housing, etc. Never a dull moment! (While the Thiessens were gone, Jerry and Monie Fluth served in that capacity and lived in the Thiessen home.)

Elmer and Jeannette are supported by the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (Canada) having served in Burkina Faso since 1987.



## Eugene Thieszen

Eugene spent much of his time in Henderson, NE, during his seven-month NAA. He did his share of reporting in the churches and preparing for another term of service. One of the highlights of his NAA was his ordination at his home congregation, Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson.

When Eugene first went to Botswana communication was by mail, then by fax and now by e-mail. Likewise his ministry has changed from missionary pilot to Bible teacher, evangelist and soccer coach. This varied ministry keeps Eugene in close touch with many different kinds of people which he enjoys very much. To enhance his ministry he is studying New Testament Greek Grammar by correspondence!

Eugene is supported by the General Conference Mennonite Church.

## Missionaries Needed

**Burkina Faso:** Church Planters, Linguists, Literacy Worker, MK School Teacher

**Senegal:** Workers for friendship evangelism, discipleship and church planting

**Lesotho:** Christian Education Worker

**Zaire:** Evangelist, Doctor/Nurse, Development worker

**Call 219-875-5552 to know how your name can appear on the following pages!**



# New Missionaries to Africa

## Sharon & Rudy Dirks



"Botswana bound!" were Rudy, Sharon, Nathan (12), Shawna (10), and Stephanie (7) Dirks when they left Thornhill, Ontario in July. A son of missionaries Henry & Tina Dirks, Rudy was no stranger to Africa. However, this time "home" would be Botswana, not Zaire. Rudy and Sharon join the AIMM team which works with the African Independent Churches, specifically in the area of teaching.

With degrees in social work and pastoral counseling respectively Sharon and Rudy bring work experiences that range from geriatric counseling to marriage and family counseling ministries. Sharon's hobbies are crafts, decorating, sewing, reading, meeting friends and community/school volunteering. Rudy's pastimes include camping, canoeing, cycling, photography, fishing, and coaching soccer and hockey.

They are sponsored by the General Conference Mennonite Church.

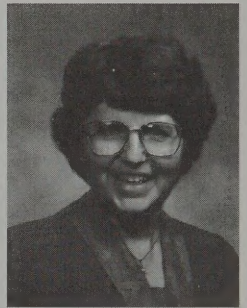
## Elvira Hamm

"Ever since my conversion there has been a 'sense' that the Lord might want to use me in Christian service farther afield at some time." That "sense" has taken Elvira to the classroom at Orodara Kalanso in Burkina Faso!

An elementary teacher from MacGregor, Manitoba, Elvira begins Phase II of her teaching career after taking early retirement. Her knowledge of English, French and German, plus travels to New Guinea, Mexico, Greece, and other parts of Europe qualify her to live and enjoy the surroundings in Orodara which she now calls home.

She plays all keyboard instruments, recorder, handbells, sings and accompanies all types of music. She reads, swims, hikes, rides bicycle, enjoys yard work, sewing and crafts. Her interest in drama and skits will fit in nicely with the puppet ministry the missionary children began last year.

She is a member of MacGregor Evangelical Mennonite Church and is sponsored by EMC/Canada.



## Adela & Richard Bergen

If these names sound familiar it is because Rick and Adela served as hostel houseparents in Kinshasa, Zaire, from 1985 to 1988. They return to Africa as staff at Dakar Academy, an international K-12 school which includes students from 24 different nationalities. This school is owned and operated by three evangelical missions: Assemblies of God, CBFMS and United World Mission. Adela and Rick also serve as support personnel for AIMM's pilot project for investigating ministry in Senegal, an AIMM dream of many years.

Rick is director of the Academy. Teaching music will be Adela's part-time assignment.

Rick lists his hobbies as "people," counseling, bookkeeping, woodworking, photography and mechanics. Adela's forte is music. They are parents of three children: Nicole (17), Joshua (14), and Micah (5).

Members of Covenant Mennonite Church, Winkler, Manitoba, they are sponsored by the General Conference Mennonite Church.



# Short-term Workers

## Lois & Buddy Dyck

Here are two more names that may sound familiar to you. Buddy and Lois return to Botswana to fill in six months for Laura and Tim Bertsche while they are on North America Assignment. The Dycks served in Francistown 1975-79 and 1980-1985. Their work was Bible teaching among the African Independent Churches which is their current assignment.

Lois and Buddy have taken a leave of absence from their respective professions as nurse and sales representative. As Elkhart, Indiana, residents their appointment is a special project of Southside Fellowship, a dual conference church representing the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church.





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Unless an alternate Box Number is listed, all mail may be sent via:

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**Ruby & Sharon Dirks**  
Nathan, Shawna, Stephanie

### Erwin & Angela Rempel

Carla (Marcia, Mark in U.S.)  
(joint sponsorship with MCC)

### Erica Thiessen

### Selebi-Phikwe

**Bryan & Teresa Born**  
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Selebi-Phikwe  
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### Maun

**Eugene Thiesen**  
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### Brian & Tricia Reimer

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Maseru  
LESOTHO

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Umtata 5100  
Republic of South Africa

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David, Maria, Erik

### Don & Kathleen Rempel

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Lisa

### From Burkina Faso:

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Josiah, Ruth, Jonathan,  
Caleb, Sarah

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### Arnold & Grace Harder

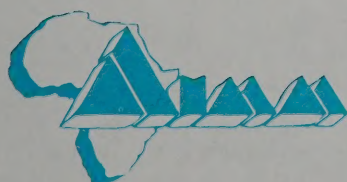
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## Editorial

# A Prayer Shortfall

An open door for ministry but no one willing to enter through that door indicates a shortfall in personnel. A set missions budget with income receipts less than the total indicates a shortfall in budget. How do we recognize a shortfall in prayer for missions?

Most of us don't set mission prayer goals. But without a goal we can't measure if we've reached our mark. Without evaluation, we lack awareness of how little we pray for mission outreach. We don't know that we have a critical shortfall.

God's Word clearly outlines the importance of prayer. Read again what God says to us.

"**PRAY** in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always

**KEEP ON PRAYING** for all the saints." Ephesians 6:18

"**ASK** the Lord of the harvest, . . . to send out workers into His harvest field." Matthew 9:38

"You, when you **PRAY**, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, **PRAY TO YOUR FATHER** who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you." Matthew 6:6

"Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they **SHOULD ALWAYS PRAY AND NOT GIVE UP.**" Luke 18:1

"**DEVOTE YOURSELVES TO PRAYER** being watchful and thankful."

Colossians 4:2

Articles throughout this issue indicate to us how much prayer is needed in ministry in Africa and how God has worked through prayer.

What is your prayer goal for AIMM outreach? Have you considered recently how well you are doing on reaching your mark? The shortfall of personnel and funds, which can be measured, must indicate we also have a shortfall of prayer!!

Please join us as a regular, diligent prayer partner. We want to see the "great and mighty things" which God will do when we **CALL ON HIM**.

—Leona Schrag

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EMC/CAN.	Evangelical Mennonite Conference
EMC/U.S.	Evangelical Mennonite Church
EMMC	Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference

GC	General Conference Mennonite Church
MB	Mennonite Brethren Conference